



TARRANT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
Division of Epidemiology and Health Information

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To: Tarrant County Health Care Providers

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HEALTH ADVISORY:

Outbreak of Cyclospora infections; test patients with consistent symptoms

Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) and The Texas Department of State Health Services is encouraging healthcare providers to test patients for Cyclospora if they have diarrheal illness lasting more than two days or diarrhea accompanied by severe anorexia or fatigue. Diagnosis of Cyclospora requires submission of stool specimens for "Ova and Parasite" testing with additional specific orders for Cyclospora. A single negative stool specimen does not exclude the diagnosis; three specimens are optimal.

Since July 10th, eleven cases of Cyclospora infection have been reported to TCPH and appear to be part of a larger cluster of cases being reported for Texas. Overall, 37 cases have been reported to the state health department in the same time frame. Public health is investigating the increased number of cases of Cyclospora infections to identify possible common exposures. Cases may possibly be related to an ongoing large multistate Cyclospora outbreak in Iowa and Nebraska.

Symptoms of Cyclosporiasis usually begin 2 to 14 days after ingestion of oocysts in contaminated food or water. Profuse diarrhea can last weeks to months, and may relapse. Additional symptoms may include anorexia, fatigue, weight loss, abdominal cramps, bloating, increased gas, nausea, vomiting, and low grade fever.

Although no common exposure source for this outbreak has yet been identified, past outbreaks in the U.S. have been associated with consumption of imported fresh produce, including raspberries, basil, snow peas, and mesclun salad green. Thorough washing of fresh produce is recommended, but may not eliminate the risk of transmission since Cyclospora can be difficult to wash off all types of produce. Infection is generally not transmitted directly from person-to-person.

Healthcare providers and laboratories should promptly report confirmed Cyclosporiasis cases to Tarrant County Public Health by fax at 817/850-8921. Information about Cyclospora is available at:

www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/gen_info/faqs.html

Report cases to Tarrant County Public Health by fax at 817/850-8921.

If you have questions please contact the Tarrant County Public Health Epidemiology 24/7 hotline (817-994-3708) or 817-321-5375 during business hours.

This alert was adapted from information provided by the Texas Department of State Health Services and the CDC.

Tarrant County Public Health
1101 S. Main St. Fort worth, TX 76104
Business Hours: 817-321-5350
After Hours: 817-994-3708 Fax: 817-850-8921